

U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Virginia*

*2100 Jamieson Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 299-3700*

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Alexandria, Virginia, June 23, 2004

For further information contact
Sam Dibbley 703-842-4050

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced today a 12 count indictment against Steven Butler, 20; Kimberly Butler, 37; Randy McCloud, Sr., 43; Michael Fincham, Jr., 22; Joshua Woodward, 20; and Allan Hawkins, 31, all residents of Culpeper and surrounding towns in central Virginia. The indictment charges the defendants with conspiracy (1 count), interstate transportation of property taken by fraud (8 counts), money laundering (2 counts), and bank fraud (1 count).

The defendants will be arraigned before U.S. District Court Judge James C. Cacheris on June 29, 2004 at 2:00 pm. If convicted on all counts, the defendants could face approximately seven years imprisonment.

The defendants are accused of seeking out elderly homeowners in northern Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., and defrauding them with a variety of home repair, yard work and pest extermination scams. The defendants, posing as employees of legitimate home repair or tree service businesses, would approach the victims' homes and, through a combination of confusion and intimidation, induce them to pay for repairs that were not needed and/or never performed. The seven elderly victims in the indictment, ranging from 79 to 88 years in age at the time they were defrauded, together lost over \$100,000 to the defendants and were part of a larger pattern of organized frauds on the elderly in the Washington area dating back to the late 1990s. Since that time, Steven Butler, working with his co-defendants and others, has targeted elderly residents in northern Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

United States Attorney Paul J. McNulty said, "These people targeted some of the most vulnerable members of our community – elderly citizens living alone. Taking advantage of both their good faith and faulty memory, they defrauded these victims – and dozens more – of thousands of dollars. Predators like these are a menace to the community. They will be aggressively prosecuted and we will pursue restitution for their victims."

Assistant United States Attorneys Andrew E. Lelling and Michael E. Rich are prosecuting the case. It is the second prosecution to arise from an ongoing investigation by the Arlington Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In the earlier case Patrick Call, Jeremy Hitt, and Michael Hardy, also young men from central Virginia, pleaded guilty to defrauding an elderly Washington, D.C. resident of over \$100,000 in three weeks in October and November 2003. Call and Hitt were recently sentenced to five years and two years, respectively; Hardy will be sentenced on July 2, 2004, and faces approximately five to seven years in prison.

It should be noted that defendants are innocent until proven guilty.